

New EU Directive on the use of Cookies on websites

By [Gareth Evans](#) on September 30, 2010

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In just a few months' time - April 2011 - an EU Directive comes into force which threatens to have a major impact on the way organisations use cookies. The rumour is that there'll be a "copy & paste" exercise carried out to make this UK law in May 2011.

From now on, a cookie can only be stored on a user's computer, or accessed from that computer, if the user "has given his or her consent, having been provided with clear and comprehensive information."

The implications for repeated user logins, customised content delivery, analytics and advertising are potentially enormous.

While the debate continues on how this will affect the way you run your online affairs, one thing is clear: you MUST be 100% aware of every single instance where your sites are setting cookies - including any from third party providers. Setting cookies without gaining a user's prior consent will put you in breach of the law, with potentially serious legal and financial consequences. As in all things to do with the law pleading ignorance will be no excuse!

While tracking down cookies manually could be all but impossible on many large-scale web estates, Sitemorse's customers have access to this information on the Inventory page of any of their audit reports. Click on the image below to see a video of how to locate your cookies report

The screenshot shows a Sitemorse Cookies site interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Dashboard | Web addresses | www.berr.gov.uk | Reports 05 Oct 2009 | Inventory | Technologies. Below this is a video player with the title "Commercial benefits are just the tip of the iceberg". The video player shows a site inventory table with columns for "Address Path" and "URL". The table lists various pages from the Berr.gov.uk website, including pages for employee engagement, appointments, consultation, users, factory, and permanent cookies. Below the table, there are links for "Show all pages with links" and "Show the site structure map".

Visit the Sitemorse Cookies site [here](#).

For more background reading on the subject here are a few links that may prove useful to you:

- <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st03/st03674.en09.pdf>
- <http://ctodilemma.com/2009/12/the-implications-of-the-eu-cookie-law/>
- <http://ctodilemma.com/2009/12/the-effect-the-eu-cookie-law-has-on-websites-marketing-and-users/>

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